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25X1

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CONTENTS

25X1

West Germany - USSR: Only slight progress was made in the latest Bahr-Gromyko talks. (Page 6)

Belgium-UN: Belgium is contemplating a resolution that shows some promise of resolving the two-Chinas impasse. (Page 7)

Dominican Republic: Negotiations for the release of the US air attaché temporarily broke down last night. (Page 8)

25X1

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25X1

Approved For Release 2003/05/29 : CIA-RDP79T00975A015800120002-2

Next 5 Page(s) In Document Exempt

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West Germany - USSR: Bonn diplomats report only slight progress in the latest phase of the Bahr-Gromyko talks in Moscow.

There are two principal obstacles: the question of the form in which frontiers should be recognized, and the West German need for some reference to a German right to reunification. Agreement is, however, reported near on a number of lesser issues, such as ending the Soviet right to intervene in West Germany and on the desirability of an eventual European security conference.

Both governments evidently will now weigh their positions. It will probably be late April before the Bonn cabinet can come to grips with the issues. At present no new date has been set for the resumption of the talks.

Meanwhile, an opposition leader in Bonn, Rainer Barzel, has approached the US ambassador with a serious appeal to the Allies to draw the line on Chancellor Brandt's Eastern policy. Barzel probably hopes that the US will express reservations during Brandt's visit to Washington. Although Barzel has advocated negotiation with the East in the past, he now professes fear that the government, in its desire for an agreement, will capitulate totally to the Soviet viewpoint.

Belgium-UN: The Belgian Government is contemplating introducing a resolution at the next UN General Assembly that shows some long-range promise of resolving the two-Chinas impasse.

The proposal would give Taiwan's seat on the Security Council to Communist China while allowing the Nationalists to remain in the General Assembly. The Belgian foreign minister regards the proposal as an alternative both to the Albanian Resolution, which would oust Taiwan completely from the UN in favor of Peking, and to the continuation of the status quo.

He fears that a number of countries might come to support the Albanian position unless offered an alternative similar to his plan. He would not expect his resolution to be adopted before two to five years.

Belgium has openly advocated a two-Chinas policy for over a year, and has closely followed the Canadian and Italian efforts to establish diplomatic relations with Peking. Although it is sympathetic to Taiwan, Belgium does not want to be one of the last countries in Western Europe to exchange diplomatic representatives with Peking. The government is under pressure at home from leftwing and moderate elements in parliament as well as from businessmen who hope that diplomatic ties with Peking will facilitate Belgian access to the Chinese market.

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[Dominican Republic: Negotiations for the release of the US air attaché temporarily broke down last night.

An agreement in substance for an exchange, achieved through the intermediary efforts of a three-member commission headed by the Santo Domingo archbishop, dissolved when the parties could not settle on details for the trade. The exact timing of the attaché's release appears to be the stumbling block, with the government insisting on a near-simultaneous exchange and the terrorists demanding that the prisoners depart before the attaché is freed.

The 20 political prisoners held by the government were scheduled to be flown to Mexico last night, but the plane departed without them. The kidnapers repeated their public warning that the government must bear the responsibility for its actions. The archbishop expected negotiations to resume today.

Despite the turmoil arising from the kidnaping, President Balaguer went ahead with his announcement that he will seek a second term in the elections of 16 May. In an attempt to head off opposition allegations that he will not provide free elections, Balaguer declared that he will hand over the presidency to the Supreme Court president during his campaign. Balaguer's long-awaited declaration is expected to generate some protests. The military, however, as a result of the President's uncompromising refusal to bow to the original demands of the kidnapers and release the prisoners in the country, is probably more strongly united than ever behind Balaguer. Security forces can be expected to deal aggressively with any disturbances.

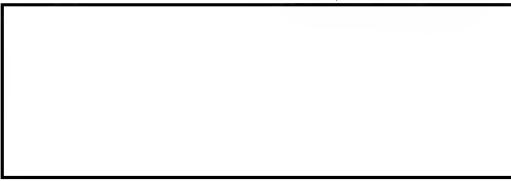
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Next 2 Page(s) In Document Exempt

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